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City of Little Rock Public Relations
Office (501) 371-4421

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Contact(s): Ben Thielemier | bthielemier@littlerock.org | (c) 501 804 4822

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Little Rock Businessmen Bring “Splash Pad” to Riverfront Park’s Children’s Play Area, Sculpture Garden

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LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS (April 24, 2014) – Families with children have yet another reason to visit Little Rock’s Riverfront Park, thanks to two Little Rock businessmen. John Burkhalter and Wayne Woods were on hand as city officials were joined by a number of guests and children to introduce a “splash pad” in the children’s play area of the park, located just behind Little Rock’s Marriott Hotel along the Arkansas River.

Burkhalter and Woods provided funding for the splash pad in honor of their children, Johnna Kay and Anna Grace Burkhalter, and Kyzer Woods. Also attending the Thursday announcement were Burkhalter’s wife, Penny, and Woods’ wife, Linda.

The splash pad opens to the public this weekend. It is part of the children’s play area of the Vogel-Schwartz Sculpture Garden, a collection of 60 pieces of art sculpture, the majority of which are within Riverfront Park. The children’s play area is designed for children up to five years old.

The Little Rock Parks and Recreation completed the construction work for the

splash pad and play area.

Little Rock Mayor Mark Stodola says the splash pad will help attract even more visitors to Riverfront Park.

"Riverfront Park is a very popular place year round. At the same time, we all know how hot the spring and summers can be in Arkansas," said Stodola.

"Having this splash pad for children and their families will attract even more people to Riverfront Park to not only enjoy it, but also the many other features of the Sculpture Garden and the entire park."

A complementing sculpture will be placed adjacent to the splash pad later this year. The sculpture, depicting a family boating outing, will include a plaque honoring Burkhalter, Woods and their support of the project.

Woods, chairman and chief executive officer of the Little Rock-based advertising and marketing firm Cranford Johnson Robinson Woods, said his investment in the project is a way to "give something back to this city, which has been so good to me and my family."

"I am a water guy. I always have been," he said. "In fact, my family and I live on the Arkansas River just west of Little Rock. When John (Burkhalter) and I heard that the city wanted to bring the splash pad to the children's play area, we both wanted to support it."

"It is exciting to be able to contribute to our family-friendly riverfront. This is something that Arkansas children and visitors will be able to enjoy for years to come," Burkhalter said. Burkhalter is president of Burkhalter Technologies and is currently building a marina just east of the Clinton Presidential Center.

Little Rock City Board member Dr. Dean Kumpuris, founder of the Sculpture at the River Market Committee, lauded Burkhalter's and Woods' investment in the garden.

"This is precisely what the committee envisioned when it came together," Kumpuris said. "We believed then, and certainly believe now, that people like Wayne and John would want to support and be part of something special like the Sculpture Garden. With the splash pad, they have allowed us to

attract people to a venue that incorporates the arts and recreation in a unique way that appeals to people of all ages,” Kumpuris added.

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